

**PETERSBURG BOROUGH, ALASKA
RESOLUTION #2014-17**

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION (IJC)
INVOLVEMENT IN THE ALASKA-BRITISH COLUMBIA TRANSBOUNDARY REGION**

WHEREAS, the transboundary rivers of the Northwest British Columbia/Southeast Alaska region, including the Taku, Stikine and Unuk rivers, are of tremendous and unique economic, ecological, cultural and recreational value. The clean water and intact habitat of these river systems make them some of the most productive wild salmon rivers on the entire west coast of North America; and

WHEREAS, with the BC Northwest Power Line bringing in power, these rivers and their tributaries are facing a significant increase in new, large-scale development and industrialization that will transform the area and impact these rivers. Several open-pit mine projects, in known acid-generating ore bodies, along with associated waste rock piles, tailings dams, energy projects, and roads, all may impact the productivity of the rivers and effect the health of the region, and

WHEREAS, the proposed mines include Tulsequah Chief in the Taku watershed; Galore Creek, Red Chris and Schaft Creek in the Stikine watershed; and the Kerr-Sulphurets-Mitchell (KSM) project in the headwaters of the Unuk River; and

WHEREAS, some of these mines would require an unprecedented level of water treatment and could pose the threat of acid mine drainage for centuries, if not in perpetuity; and

WHEREAS, there has been little transparent dialogue between Canada and the U.S. regarding the proposed projects and specific ways to ensure our interests are protected; and

WHEREAS, environmental laws and permitting processes in BC and Canada have been weakened over the past decade. The ongoing acid mine drainage from the Tulsequah Chief mine and the tailings dam failure at the Mt. Polley mine demonstrate weaknesses in monitoring and enforcement; and

WHEREAS, commercial fishermen, subsistence and recreational users, local communities, elected leaders and native tribes on both sides of the Canadian/U.S. border have all raised concerns about the pace and scope of the proposed industrial development in British Columbia and the potential for harm to fish and wildlife, and local economies; and

WHEREAS, maintaining and protecting healthy wild salmon populations throughout these river systems must be a priority. The concerns of local communities,

individuals and user groups downstream from these projects must be integral to any transboundary watershed development decisions making; and

WHEREAS, the Canadian and BC permitting processes have not offered opportunity for these voices to be heard; and

WHEREAS, the Boundary Waters Treaty states “waters flowing across the boundary shall not be polluted on either side to the injury of health or property on the other” and provides a mechanism to address transboundary river concerns known as the International Joint Commission.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we strongly urge the government of the United States to work with the government of Canada to refer the issue of transboundary development in the BC and Alaska region to the International Joint Commission and to utilize any and all powers under the Boundary Waters Treaty to ensure that our resources are not harmed by upstream development in BC; and

BE IT FURTHER REOLVED, that affected communities and governments be consulted with, and represented in, any policy discussions related to impacts to these watersheds.

Passed and Approved by the Petersburg Borough Assembly on October 20, 2014.

Mark Jensen, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kathy O'Rear, City Clerk